PERIODICO EN ESPAÑOL ADENTRO

CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM ★ LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO ★ PLP

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IT'S NOT JUST TRUMP— IT'S CAPITALISM





NEW YORK CITY, March 19—"Trump, Bernie, Clinton all the same—racist terror is the name of the game!" Over 30 Progressive Labor Party members and friends made a revolutionary uproar at an anti-Donald Trump rally and march. While nearly 2,000 demonstrators called out only Trump for his vicious racism against the working class, a multiracial PLP exposed the endemic racism of the profit system and all of its stooge politicians: conservatives and liberals, Democrats and Republicans and "democratic socialists."

The rally began with speeches by immigrants' rights fighters, students and various organizations. As they spoke, we distributed 500 CHALLENGEs. We also contributed chants that changed a reformist political tone to a communist one.

Shut This Racist System Down

Trump is the most open and obvious racist in the current president campaign, and his attack on Muslim, Latin, and immigrant workers and youth must be countered wherever he dares to show his garbage-spewing face. Even if he never gets elected, Trump is helping mobilize the anti-Arab and anti-Muslim racist fervor needed by the main wing of U.S. capitalism for the next global war to control Middle Eastern oil. But Democrats Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders are playing their own deadly roles in luring workers away from rebellion and into the voting booth (see CHALLENGE, 3/23). It is the task of communists to expose all of capitalism, not just one particular puppet.

That's what we did as the crowd marched through Central Park and across 59th Street and passed numerous upscale hotels and restaurants, including some owned by Trump. Our bullhorn finally gave out, but our chants stayed strong. When PLP called out the whole system as racist with the chant, "This whole damn system—shut it down!" a large number of youth and workers joined our contingent. When communists bring forth a sharp line, the working class more often than

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CHICAGO, March 11—Thousands of protestors succeeded in stopping the appearance of gutter racist presidential candidate Donald Trump at the University of Illinois (UIC). The crowd was young, multiracial and international, and receptive to Progressive Labor Party's communist ideas.

UIC student groups were outraged that the university would allow such a racist, anti-immigrant politician like Trump to speak, exposing the university bosses' allegiance to the capitalist ruling class. The more conservative student groups, which support Bernie Sanders, called for peace, non-violence, and freedom of speech. Other student groups rejected that liberal program. A young Latin woman took the microphone and said, "The cops don't understand peace and harmony—we need violence!" The microphone was quickly taken away from her. So much for the bosses' phony free speech!

"Racists Go Home"

Many protestors gained access to the auditorium where Trump was to speak, and shouted anti-Trump slogans as the police tried to remove them. Trump was forced to cancel when it became clear that anti-racist militancy could not be silenced.

Scuffles and pushing matches broke out between Trump supporters and anti-racists. To clear the auditorium, the cops led Trump supporters into the parking lot. The anti-racists followed them, chanting, "Racists go home!" A protester threw a bottle, hitting a kkkop on the head.

It's Not Just Trump; It's the Profit System

PLP members and friends participated in the demonstration of thousands outside the building. We distributed over a thousand leaflets and 150 CHALLENGEs. We explained that unapologetically racist Trump, Wall Street-raised Clinton, and so-called socialist Sanders are all servants of the capitalist ruling class. Like Barack Obama, any president will continue to murder our class sisters and brothers in their wars for maximum profit. No matter which

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OUR FIGHT

✯Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

◗ the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

✯Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

✯While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

✯Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

✯Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

✯Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

✯Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✯Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

✯Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

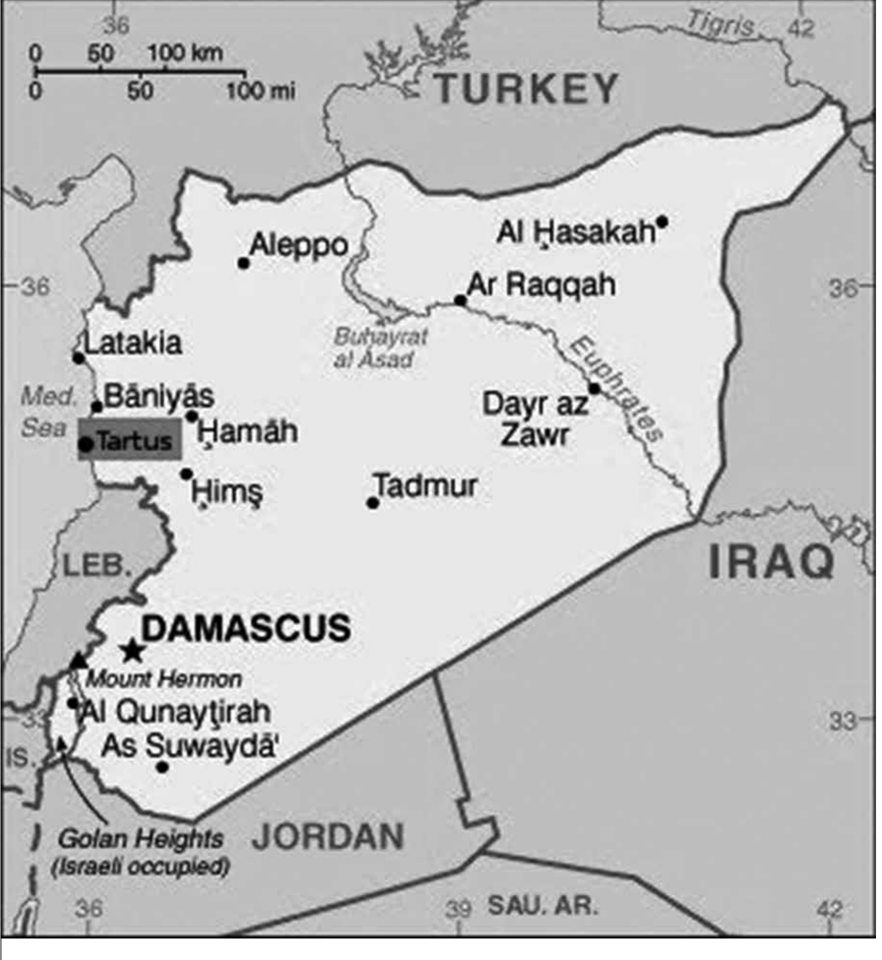
The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Syria: Key to Russian Imperialism



Map of Syria with the port city of Tartus highlighted

As the Russian capitalists scale back their recent bombing campaign in Syria, they're calling it a "withdrawal." But the international working class should make no mistake: The Russian bosses are leveraging their military might to consolidate and expand their influence in the oil-rich Middle East. They will use their strengthened position to extort more favorable terms in the upcoming "peace" talks that could wind up partitioning Syria.

Sooner than later, the Russian rulers' maneuvering will translate into a more intense conflict with the U.S. bosses, whose empire also relies on controlling Middle Eastern oil. In the current period, capitalists around the world are intensifying racism, sexism, nationalism and fascism in attempts to coerce workers to kill and be killed in the bosses' wars.

The international working class must reject all of these toxic ideologies. Workers can be liberated only by their own class—and by building a mass revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party. Capitalist bosses will never "withdraw" their violent dictatorship over the working class. That's why PLP fights back against the entire capitalist system. Our Party is building toward armed revolution in every country to smash racism, sexism, national borders and imperialism. From Anaheim to Ankara, every anti-immigrant rally is an opportunity to build international solidarity. From Pakistan to Palestine, every racist, sexist budget attack is an opportunity to fight back. These are the sparks of communist revolution. Our organizing will fan the flames.

Syria: Russia's Imperialist Key

The Syrian port city of Tartus is Russia's only access point to the Mediterranean Sea. Without Tartus, Russian warships would need to pass through the narrow Bosporus Strait—controlled by the U.S. bosses' powerful regional ally, Turkey—to return to their Black Sea bases. The Russian bosses can't afford to lose this port to U.S.-backed Syrian "rebels," a big factor in their support for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. At the same time, they've suggested that they'd accept Assad's removal if their interests were guaranteed (Reuters, 12/18/15).

From newly expanded bases in both Tartus and Latakia, Russia's rulers have ensured direct access to the Middle East's energy resources. They've also blocked plans by U.S., Turkish and Qatari capitalists plans to overthrow Assad and build their own pipeline through Syria:

> *The Russians have placed an impenetrable obstacle to the development of the [U.S.-backed] Qatar gas pipeline. Russia has also placed itself at the nexus point of other new offshore gas discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean, including Israel, Cyprus, and Greece (Oilprice.com, 3/16/16).*

Meanwhile, as the Boston Globe (3/16/16) pointed out, the abrupt halt to their heavy bombing of Syria (if only temporarily) helps the Russian bosses on several fronts:

> *The Russians have a lot at stake in the shattered country. Moscow wants to keep Syria open to Russian goods, particularly arms and machinery, since the Russian economy is so driven by the oil and gas sectors….Putin will now have more time to focus on [the war in Ukraine] as he seeks guarantees that [Ukraine] will not join NATO….In addition, Putin's decision to cut the campaign short helps to limit the growing anger among [Sunni Muslims] over Russia's heavy hand in Syria. This, in turn, reduces the terrorist threat to Russia.*

U.S.-Russia Rivalry Heating Up

Russia's troop drawdown marks an growing weakness in the U.S. political, economic, and military position in the Middle East. U.S. bosses were caught off-guard by Russia's next move, never a good sign. The Economist, the London-based cheerleader for U.S. imperialism, could offer only guesses on Russia's intentions. The liberal imperialist Guardian Weekly (3/14/16) suggested that Vladimir Putin's regime had once again out-maneuvered the U.S. and its European allies:

> *Nobody wanted to deal with Russia after Ukraine, and the goal of the Syria campaign was to force the [W]est to deal with Russia again… [and now they've left] with minimal losses…It's a pretty brilliant tactical move.*

Along with an emboldened anti-U.S. Iran, plus a growing Chinese imperialist presence through their "One Belt, One Road" (see CHALLENGE, 3/9/16), Russia's escalation in Syria is changing the balance of power in the Middle East. Russian and Chinese imperialists, the U.S. bosses' main rivals, are carefully watching the U.S. 2016 presidential campaign. What they're seeing can only encourage them: a divided, undisciplined U.S.

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It's Not Just Trump—It's Capitalism

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not responds with enthusiasm. (One Bernie Sanders supporter did try to shut us down—unsuccessfully.)

Tension from the police rose as the march exited the park and entered the streets of Manhattan. They began to form a solid ring around us, hassling us to quicken our pace. We boldly responded with the chant, "NYPD, KKK, How many kids did you kill today?" As the march headed south onto Madison Avenue, passing Gucci, Louis Vuitton, and Chanel, we defiantly chanted, "Capitalism means we've got to fight back!" All eyes and ears were on us, in the stores and in the streets. But the excitement was short-lived. As the march approached 57th Street, the police forces multiplied. They used their Long Range Acoustic Device, a sonic weapon, to warn us to stay on the sidewalk and not impede foot traffic. The cops arrested three protesters and pepper-sprayed the crowd.

Shut Down Highways, Not Just Shopping

At the same time, another anti-Trump rally blocked traffic on a highway in Arizona in an attempt to stop thousands from attending a pro-Trump event. Disrupting upscale shopping on Madison Avenue was certainly an intense experience, but it was not sufficiently militant to point us toward the actions we'll need to take to shut down capitalism. The Arizona protest was a bolder step in that direction.

Don't Vote, Organize for Communism

Fundamentally, the fervent support for Sanders and Trump stems from the same source: The working class is fed up with capitalist politics. Both the racist supporters of Trump and liberal backers of Sanders are deceived in trusting "maverick" politicians to have working-class interests at heart. The working class wants change, but electoral politics can only preserve the capitalist status quo—while giving workers the illusion of having a choice. The big capitalist bosses at Exxon-Mobil, JPMorgan Chase and Citigroup will make sure that the next president will continue to protect the interests of U.S. imperialism, as the rulers advance toward a broader global war. As an international working class, we must break out of the jail of electoral politics. We must organize anti-racist, anti-sexist fightbacks in our schools, jobs and streets. By continuing to fight racist tuition hikes, mass deportations and state-terrorist drone strikes, we'll continue to show the bosses they cannot get away with violence against the working class.



There's an alternative to the Clinton/Trump/Sanders/Cruz clique of ruling-class misleaders. That's Progressive Labor Party. We stand for communism, a world system where all workers and youth will work together to meet our class's collective needs. PLP continues to show that no matter our race, gender or nationality, the working class is united in a common struggle—the struggle for workers' power. Don't vote—organize for the long haul, for communist revolution!✪

Protesters Dump Trump

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candidate wins, workers will lose. Capitalism is based on racism, war and the exploitation of the working class. Only a revolutionary communist party can destroy capitalism once and for all.

Communists Welcome, Must Give Leadership

Demonstrators were interested in communist ideas and what CHALLENGE had to say. Many gave us donations and contact information. One student gave $20 for a CHALLENGE subscription on the spot. A student from Serbia expressed interest in organizing PLP there.

Self-critically, we could have given more leadership; we had too few papers and no bullhorn. Before the demonstration, we discussed the idea of disrupting Trump's speech from the inside. We decided we'd go in if our friends wanted to. As it turned out, anti-racists inside the building took the lead and were invigorated to fight against Trump's racist supporters. Moving forwards, we must give bolder leadership. We will develop more confidence in the working class as we build a mass party.

There will be many more opportunities to lead workers and students on the road to communist revolution. Let's build for a massive celebration of May Day, the international working class holiday representing fightback and our potential to build a communist world.✪



Celebrate International Working Women's Day

CHICAGO, March 11—*Fight sexism by fighting capitalism. Fight capitalism by fighting sexism.* With this dialectical poster message and others, comrades and friends of PLP celebrated International Working Women's Day with our third annual dinner. A room full of over 40 workers and youth honored past and present working women by sharing some of the rich history of their contributions to anti-capitalist movements and towards a communist society.

The event was organized with the goals of continuing to develop a sense of international communist culture within the Party and around our friends. We also wanted to sharpen the consistent anti-sexist struggle and build communism. Those in attendance were treated to a program that included class-conscious poetry, a case study describing gender equality in hunter-gatherer societies, a brief history of the holiday, and personal recollections of immigrant mothers fighting to keep their community center from being destroyed by the racist and sexist bosses. The event wrapped up with an open political discussion, and finally dancing and socializing.

Giant Leap for the Working Class

A central theme in setting the political tone of this year's program was the importance of challenging the sexist division of labor. The Soviet Union made lifetime leaps for the equality of women and men. This included collective childrearing, thus redefining the family, legalization of abortion ages before the capitalist United States, struggled with women to give political leadership, were taught literacy, and much more.

A legitimate criticism of both Soviet and Chinese revolutions in their fight for gender equality is that while these societies were effective in getting women to work in roles that had long been traditionally "male" (such as heavy industry or the military), there wasn't as much effort in winning men and women workers to understand the importance of tasks long characterized as "female" work, such as childcare and cleaning.

While the old communist movement made the most qualities advance for women workers in history, its socialist economics did not eliminate the core of gender divisions: unpaid vs. paid labor. Contrast that with our vision for a communist future, where there are no wages or profits. All labor is done according to commitment and struggle. PLP is putting the pieces in place for a society that begins to undo all the damage caused by thousands of years of sexism in thought and practice.

As one comrade remarked during the open discussion, before we can see that future, there needs to be an international communist revolution led by PLP to destroy capitalism, the present form of class society and primary root of women's oppression. She explained the need for women leadership in class struggle in the fight for communism. It's essential for all of us to challenge the bosses' sexist exploitation and sexist culture.

Celebrating International Working Women's Day is a huge inspiration. Fight sexism in the class struggle—at work, in schools, in the hospitals, streets, military, and wherever you are. Fight sexism by building a communist Progressive Labor Party worldwide. Let's celebrate by fighting with anti-sexist politics every day of the year!✪

Combat Racist, Sexist CSU Shutdown

CHICAGO, March 17—Illinois politicians are failing working-class college youth. Unable to agree on how to deal with the budget impasse, the bosses are furthering the attack on the working class by shutting down Chicago State University (CSU). This racist, sexist assault on the mainly Black and women students has been met with fightback and some communist leadership by Progressive Labor Party.

While all of Illinois's public schools are struggling financially, CSU in particular is in the most precarious situation since it relies on the state for one-third of its budget.

CSU's impending doom is already visible: at a February 27 press conference, CSU officials announced that all 900 of its employees face possible layoffs at the end of the semester. Three days earlier, the University had cancelled spring break in order to end the semester a week early.

CSU's closing will pose dire consequences for its working-class students. It is the state's only majority Black student public university. In addition, 70 percent of the students are women. CSU graduates more Black students than any other Illinois public college or university. It also sends more Black graduates to medical schools than all other Illinois public colleges or universities combined. Shutting down CSU would force many Black and Latin students into the low-wage job market or into the "economic draft" leading to military service.

Students and Workers Fight Back; Bosses Mislead

Some students and faculty are fighting this racist and sexist attack. On January 28, about 25 fighters marched onto the nearby I-94 interstate highway, briefly shutting it down, as well as two other expressways feeding into it. Then, on February 8, more than 50 CSU students and faculty rallied at the State of Illinois building and marched through downtown Chicago to protest CSU's possible closing. We need more of this, as it exposes the working class's refusal to take the losses of this capitalist-caused budget crisis.

Unfortunately, most students and faculty in the current struggle are won to the CSU administration's line of protesting only within legal limits. The administration has brought to campus Jesse Jackson, members of the Illinois legislative Black Caucus, and other obedient servants of capitalism. Bernie Sanders used CSU's convocation center for one of his rallies.

The message of these liberal politicians is to register to vote and rely on politicians to solve our problems for us. They defend capitalism and are misleading a new generation of workers to know their place in this racist, sexist system. This was evident when one student leader at the February 8 rally said: "We're not asking for reform. We're not asking for revolution. We're asking for them to do their basic duty. Sign the darn budget."

Leading with Communist Politics

But revolution for communism is exactly what is needed to fulfill the needs of CSU's working-class students. The basic duty of politicians and government stooges is to defend capitalism's profit needs. The proposed CSU shutdown reveals the universities as part of the ruling-class machine. Well aware of this fact, PLP members and friends have joined the protests, brought CHALLENGE into the classroom and have expanded our campus study groups. We're struggling with students and faculty to understand that a revolution for a communist society is the only answer.

Under communism, a college education would be free, students and teachers would work collectively in planning the curriculum and racist and sexist divisions will be prohibited. Communist education would train students to critically evaluate and build their new society. There will be no more divisions between manual and mental labor.

In building for May Day — a worldwide communist holiday — our slogan at CSU is, "Don't Vote, Organize for Communist Revolution." Following liberal politicians and union leaders has already led to fascism in the U.S. Under their direction, the working class has been subjected to racism, sexism, wars, poverty, police terror and mass incarceration. Organizing for communist revolution means joining PLP to build a world free of these budget-slashing politicians, racist cops and their profit-hungry bosses. Another world is possible!

Syria: Key to Russian Imperialism

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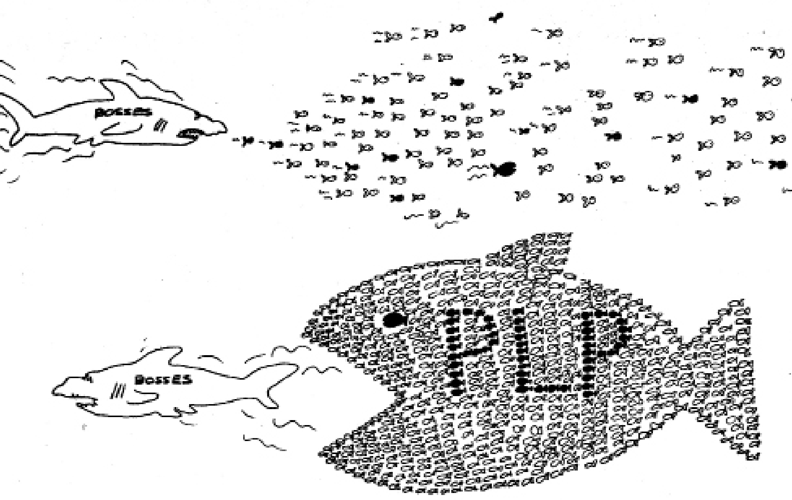
ruling class, and a cynical, disaffected U.S. working class.

The two presidential candidates drawing the largest crowds of workers—Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders—represent increasingly desperate attempts by mainstream U.S. finance capitalists to keep workers voting instead of rebelling. The bosses are straining to mislead workers with KKK-style racism on the one hand, and bogus calls for economic fairness and equality—an impossibility under the profit system—with the other. The divisiveness and racist violence encouraged by Trump, in particular, has exposed the fractured political loyalties of the U.S. working class. This is a huge potential obstacle for the U.S. ruling class and its plan-of-necessity for a military draft and a broader global war.

Meanwhile, Black workers who led and supported rebellions in Ferguson and Baltimore aren't rushing in droves to enlist in the U.S. military to fight for U.S. imperialism. The U.S. Army barely met its recruitment goal in 2015 after lagging for most of the year (USA Today, 10/1/15).

Until the main wing of U.S. bosses succeeds in disciplining their own capitalist class, a central ingredient of fascism, they will be hard-pressed to win the working class to sacrifice for U.S. imperialism. Their options in the Middle East will be limited. The Russians' recent gains in Syria do not bode well for their near-term future:

> *It may also help better position Russia for whomever succeeds Obama in the White House: an America that perceives itself humiliated in Syria by Russia and its allies' military prowess is less likely to participate in any reset, and more likely to do the reverse (Huffington Post, 3/17/16).*



Crush Capitalism With Communist Revolution

Under capitalism, no matter which camp of bosses is gaining, the working class loses. During the devastating, ongoing, five-year Syrian civil war, essentially a proxy fight between imperialist super-powers, U.S.-provided weapons are being used in terror attacks in the U.S. and worldwide. The conflict has murdered more than one million workers and displaced millions more, with women and children hit hardest. Displaced people have suffered extreme racism and sexism in refugee camps. Those who manage to reach Europe are confronted with violent anti-immigrant racism.

All politicians—including Trump, Sanders, and Hillary Clinton—serve the capitalist class. They are used to try to veil the essential conflict between two mortally opposed forces: the capitalist class and the working class. Either we crush the bosses, or the bosses keep trampling our class. PLP is open to all workers who want to see a mass, fighting communist movement smash this system once and for all. Join us!✪

Out of the Reformist Marsh and Into Communist Struggle

UPSTATE NEW YORK, February 21—Progressive Labor Party and friends created new potential for communist struggle here. A militant couple who fought alongside PLP in Ferguson invited four members to a forum they organized commemorating the 50th anniversary of Malcolm X's assassination.

They are a tough and wholehearted inter-racial couple, Megan and Keyon, craving revolution but complained of political isolation. The couple's second interaction with us after Ferguson was communists taking the streets in a Fight like Ferguson forum that turned into a march through Harlem. After spending the weekend with us debating everything from identity politics to communist history, and taking literature like Road to Revolution and CHALLENGEs to read at the last time we met them, they began to see reformism for the marsh it was.

That Next Level S#*!

Megan and Keyon are staunch anti-racists and anti-sexists who developed a political line close to PLP through raising class struggle in their neighborhoods. The Malcolm X forum filled a whole room filled with college students, women, men, Black, and white looking for answers. Megan and Keyon quickly turned this forum into a struggle against reformism.

A Black professor opened with a presentation about Jamaica's slave revolts. His conclusion: "Black people need to establish a world and space apart and need seeds in African culture." Leave it to a reformist to turn exciting historical development into a mundane over-60 minute lecture. His nationalist politics received little response from the crowd.

Next, Megan talked about fighting back, not "watering down the politics to appease people" and wants "that next level S#*!" She got that ruthlessness about "calling out bs when I see it" in her work and in herself. She spoke openly about denouncing Sanders as another capitalist politician.

Then, Keyon have a speech about his journey from a "typical Black youth" to "being conscious and meeting his comrades in the PLP in Ferguson" and how that has influenced him to fight back. After some wholehearted struggle from us, he opened his speech with the poem, "Good Morning Revolution" by the communist writer Langston Hughes. Our friends' presentations sharply contrasted in content and tone from the professor.

Halt Sexism, Reformism

During the Question & Answer period, two PL'ers spoke of how we are fighting for a communist revolution to create a world without racism, sexism and wars for profit, and eliminating the profit system all together. This can only be achieved though multiracial, international communist movement. The audience was applauded



and asked questions. The PLP's multi-racial presence of fierce women and men hinted at the kind of world we wanted to build.

Frustrated by the talk of revolution, the professor tried to end the forum by telling everyone to join his "action" to "improve the tactics of the police." Boy oh boy, was that a mistake! He dared to clap in Megan's face to shut her up. Megan halted the sexist gesture at once. She was called out the professor's collaborationist politics with the police and politicians. "I'm not letting YOU get off

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G20: Race for Imperialist Domination

Under the veneer of "stabilizing" the world economy, finance ministers and central bankers of the most powerful capitalist powers met in Shanghai, China to maneuver ways to compete against each other for world domination. Known as the G20, the group included China, the U.S., Russia, U.K., France, Germany, Japan and other up-and-coming powers like Brazil, India and South Africa. China's economy in particular took center stage — representing its growth as a staunch competitor in the race for imperialist domination.

Capitalism Needs Competitions

The worldwide 2007-9 economic crisis of capitalism has never receded. Rather, it has spread from the U.S. to different parts of the capitalist world at different times, much like a row of dominoes in a circle falling down. From Iceland to Greece to Brazil and now to China, the interconnection between capitalist economies all over the world guarantees that the normal "boom-and-bust" cycle of capitalism reverberates far beyond the national borders of each economy.

Of course, each group of bosses is fighting like hell for the interests of the capitalists of "their country." This is precisely why these thieves can and will never reach full agreement — each one is trying to get a leg up on all the rest. Competition, after all, remains an essential component of the capitalism.

China Looms Large

The Shanghai G20 takes place in the midst of the biggest economic downturn in China since the restoration of capitalism. The great economic boom of the 1990s and 2000s — which relied on the exploitation of former agricultural workers in China's huge manufacturing centers — has ended since there is no longer a steady supply of cheap labor from the countryside. Many Chinese companies can't repay loans given by the central government to keep the boom going. The Chinese commercial real estate upsurge has run its course. To keep Chinese manufacturing competitive, the Finance Ministry has devalued the Chinese currency by four percent, making Chinese goods cheaper for consumers overseas buying in dollars and other non-Chinese currency. This puts pressure on producers seeking to compete with Chinese production and is setting off alarms worldwide of the possibility of a currency war (Willem Buiter, Citigroup, 2/26/16).

Some Chinese bosses are looking to the investor tax cut/deregulation regimes of 1980s U.S. and U.K. for inspiration. According to Jia Kang, an economist in the Ministry of Finance, "Thatcher and Reagan are highly regarded … [t]heir spirit was one of boldly taking on challenges and innovating, and that's certainly worth Chinese people emulating" (NY Times, 3/4/16). Ask tens of thousands of British miners or tens of thousands of U.S. air traffic controllers who lost their jobs then about their bosses "boldness" and innovation." In other words, Workers in China, beware!

Just as China is building up its military, and especially its Navy, to eventually challenge U.S. domination of South Asian and Mid-East trade routes, China and the U.S. are also fighting each other over who is to be the economic leader of the capitalist world. U.S. Treasury Secretary Lew, for example, demanded the Chinese stop keeping their currency artificially low, making Chinese imports to the U.S. cheaper.

One common refrain from Trump and Sanders is that U.S. capitalism has to gear up for a trade war with China. This cynical pro-worker posturing at the extremes of the electoral political spectrum is an effort to school all the many millions of newly activated voters in the lesson that to make the U.S. a great nation its workers must line up for a confrontation with China. No matter who wins this election that message reflects a long-term need of U.S. capital and will remain a fixture in the policy agenda of the next president.

Workers be on Guard

History shows us that imperialist war is inevitable. The lead-up to World War II, after all, featured currency wars, which led to trade wars and eventually armed wars. The inevitable march towards war can never be stopped by phony "statements of unity" issued after capitalist conferences like the G20.

The "stability" these servants of capital claim to seek only means a future of more efficient and vicious exploitation of labor. Imperialists only relate to each other in two ways: in war or preparation for war. The world's working class is the only force capable of abolishing this deadly interchange of intense exploitation followed by mass unemployment and the increasing likelihood of major wars. Only under the leadership of the revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party can workers achieve the overthrow of bosses' governments worldwide, finally bringing an end to centuries of misery and bloodshed for our class.✪

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Haiti Comrades Weigh In on Iran Deal

Comments from comrades in Haiti for our readers to think about regarding "Iran Deal Signals War Prep" editorial (CHALLENGE, 2/10):

First, nuclear power is an economic asset, a source of profit for the Iranian bosses. It's also a weapon to inspire fear in other exploiters, who would want some of the profits and benefits of Iranian nuclear energy.

Second, the U.S. seeks to fracture and destabilize the relationships between its main rivals Russia and China and their allies. One way is to enter into pseudo-friendships with the allies of their rivals. The Iran nuclear deal is a kind of pseudo-friendship with Iran, offering relief from sanctions and renewed trade with the U.S. and its European allies as incentives.

Another U.S. destabilization strategy is trying to convince regional bosses like Iran — allied with the Russian and Chinese imperialists — that these alliances will hurt Iran's bosses in the long run. The U.S. bosses want Iran's bosses to think they're getting a better deal by breaking away from Russia and China. That explains why the U.S. and Europe were willing to brave the anger of their allies Israel and Saudi Arabia, to show Iran's bosses that the deal was serious.

Upon the 1979 Islamist overthrow of the murderous U.S.-backed Shah government, Russia and China developed deep political and economic ties with Iran's bosses. After 1979, Iran's new bosses launched a long period of hostility with the U.S. and Europe. The political ties with Iran's bosses strengthened Russia's and China's bosses and included Iran's membership in the key political and military alliance of NATO's rivals, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The economic ties include key gas supplies and pipelines.

Third, it is inter-imperialist wars that are responsible for the economic crises, the nightmares of migration, the upsurge in racism everywhere, and the shocking barbarity now haunting the planet. The victim of all this is the working class. The biggest bosses and the capitalist nation-states do not lose at all by this horror. They prepare for the clashes with their rivals on the backs of the working class.

They will try to intensify racism and nationalism among the workers to get them to participate in these barbaric wars. The bosses benefit from this horror: for them the misery of countries which they have long kept in wretched poverty simply becomes favorable terrain for future exploitation — think of Haiti and several countries on the African continent.

Lastly, we can draw some inspiration from the rebellions and uprisings of the popular masses against imperialism, and especially against the illusion of democracy and its farcical elections as a way to win power for the workers in these small capitalist countries. Haiti is an example of such rebellions. PLP is seizing the opportunity of such rebellions to advance our communist political ideas. Soon many of those who have taken part in these struggles will have joined our ranks.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Racist Speech Is the First Punch

Let's put yet another nail in the coffin of the ruling-class against the concept of free speech. The line that capitalist ideology draws between speech and violence is an arbitrary one. Many well-intentioned and anti-racist people believe this lie.

Let's face the fact that the punch thrown by anti-racists at Klansmen, Nazis, and other members of that fascist collection is not the first punch. It is actually thrown in self defense and defense of our class. Racist speech is the first punch, whether it occurs in an unorganized context or in the context of a hate rally where the speaker is immediately exhorting others to attack Black, Latin, Muslim, immigrant, gay or any other targeted group.

The imaginary line between speech and violence is a false one. Racist speech in any context is a first punch and is just as violent as a physical punch, and even more so as it strikes millions at once.

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Cultivating New Communists

Continued from page 5

talking about police reforms," she said. Clearly, Megan and Keyon were fed up with reformism.

In a room full of strangers, the environment of reform vs. revolution made it feel just like home. We had passive supporters who came up to us after the event. No one— not even the righteous reformists—came out and said, "don't listen to PLP." In fact, one older man said, "this young woman in PLP just laid out what to do. They got a paper, a study group…She encouraged investigate…Now you can't say you don't know what to do."

Taking Leadership from Working Class

After the forum, we met so many inspiring people—a woman who escaped NATO bombing of Yugoslavia; a Black soldier who understood the need for armed revolution—he also called out the bullsh*t of white privilege theory before we did; a social worker and a student who loved our ideas, and a self-labeled asocial film maker who took 20 CHALLENGEs to distribute.

During the post-forum dinner, our new and old friends discussed the need to organize with people. The couple realized they actually do have a base of friends to raise class struggle with.

We left them with 300 CHALLENGEs, which they agreed to distribute, a list of contacts from the event to create a political base. We also discussed the need for collective leadership outside of just Megan. Their friends and Keyon were willing to step up and give more leadership. They were excited about May Day and our East Coast College Conference on April 2!

They said the Party is the only organization where they felt "the most comfortable" with the people and where the politics and the world finally made sense. We were taken aback. Here is a bunch of people who came almost to the same conclusions without being in the Party. We aren't the only ones fighting Sanders, voting, and Black nationalism. That's inspiration!

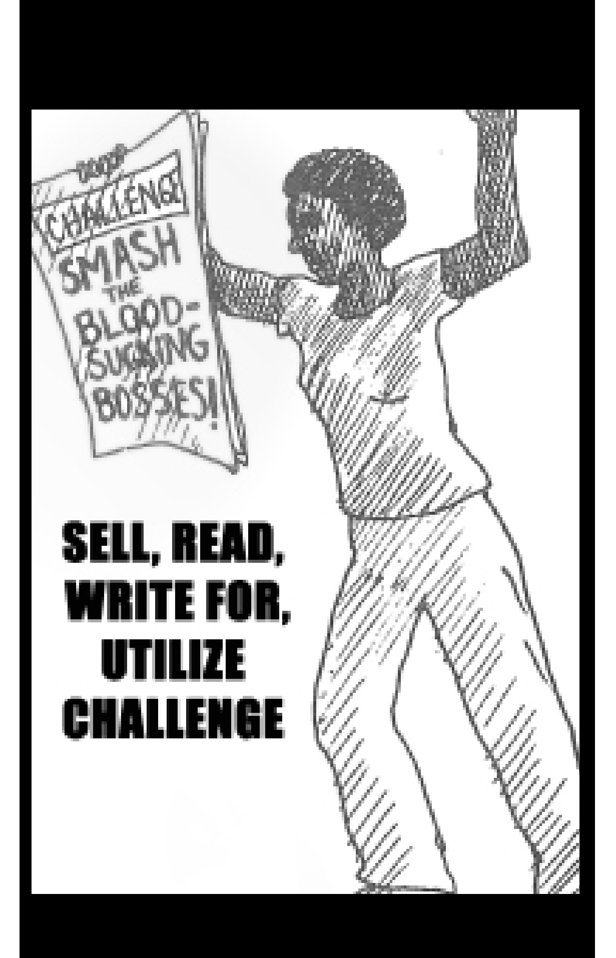
All four of us PL'ers grew a little bit more that day, thanks to these brave members of the working class. We asked them, "you keep calling us comrades, you consider yourself part of the Party?"

They said, "there is nothing I disagree with, but I want to do more reading before I commit to a yes." With consistent struggle and comradeship, the working class can look forward to having a communist base here!✪

CORRECTIONS

In the previous issue's article about battling the KKK and KKKops in Anaheim, CA., CHALLENGE's use of the pronoun we was ambiguous. In "While we were rallying, a black SUV pulled up," the *we* refers only to the general group of antiracists. In fact, after two hours of waiting, our PLP members left to attend an event about the police murder of a young Latin man nearby. They returned at the sound of sirens and a helicopter, by which the stabbing had already occurred. The encounter in which our members were arrested occurred when we stopped one of the KKKers from walking away. In the first attack, no cops were present. In the second encounter, the police were there in force to protect the Klan and attack and arrest us.

The article about Columbia University's fight for minimum wage on campus makes an incorrect reference to workers. They are disproportionately, not mainly, Black and Latin.



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Friedrichs Attack Demands Communist Counterattack

The court case of Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association is another attack on U.S. public sector union workers. Today, in many such unions, workers who refuse to join the union still must pay their "fair share" for the benefits both members and non-members enjoy. Under the guise of "free speech," this case would end that practice. A non-union worker would pay no fee but still receive the same benefits as paying union members, significantly limiting the power of workers to fight back collectively. This idea of "fair share" has been upheld many times since the 1977 Abood Supreme Court case.

Since the death of Supreme Court Justice Antonio Scalia, the fate of Friedrichs is very much up in the air, but the attack on the working class is very much alive. And since public sector workers are largely Black and women, this is a racist and sexist attack, once again dividing and weakening the entire working class (see box).

In the past, when led by communists, unions won some significant victories. The include Social Security, unemployment benefits, the 5-day 40-hour work-week, better wages, and other gains, made with militant, often illegal. Workers broke the bosses' laws. They fought pitched violent battles against hired gun thugs, police and army troops. In the U.S., they included general strikes in numerous cities and mass community support for anti-racist walkouts like the 1968 Memphis sanitation workers' strike.

In the 1930's, during the Great Depression, the rulers feared workers' anger might lead to communist revolution as occurred in Russia. Their fears were fueled by the bonus march of World War I veterans, hunger marches and the 44-day sit-down strike against General Motors workers in Flint, Michigan. To appease and pacify the working class the rulers passed the New Deal reforms and were forced to allow some unionization. But eventually they installed a reformist, anti communist union leadership which kept their demands modest and did not challenge capitalism.

Today U.S. rulers are being increasingly challenged, both economically and politically, by imperialist rivals such as China and Russia. They need more funds for their present and future wars, meaning less and less for the working class. The union movement is a shell of its former self, allowing the ruling class to cut back or eliminate many past reforms such as welfare, housing, pensions, education, mass transit budgets, and benefits. The Friedrichs Supreme Court case is one more attempt to lower the living standards of all U.S. workers.

Reforms never last. The answer to Friedrichs and other attacks is to rebuild a revolutionary, fighting communist-led working-class movement. In the past, when communists tried to build such a movement, unfortunately they made winning reforms primary. The gains have been slowly taken away. The movement that we in the Progressive Labor Party are building must make revolution primary. Let's get rid of capitalism once and for all.

What Can and Should We Do?

Today the working class has been divided and weakened, so the bosses attack and attack and attack. Racism, nationalism, sexism, and individualism harm our collective ability to fight back. We must spread the communist ideas of militant struggle wherever we are. Organizing on the job must address class solidarity, anti-racism, anti-sexism and call to smash capitalist exploitation. We need to build student-parent-teacher alliances in the schools, hospital worker-patient alliances and worker-client alliances wherever we can. We need to organize workers to fight racism much as was done during the teachers' strike against the Chicago school system. PL'ers must involve themselves in the struggles large and small at their workplaces and in their communities. We can't stand by idly while the bosses attack. However, our goal goes much farther than each individual struggle. We aim to eliminate the bosses' attacks by building for, and winning, a communist revolution!✪

The Friedrichs Case Is A Racist and Sexist Attack!

Attacking public sector unions has long been a way out of poverty for Black and women workers

Women comprise 55 percent of government workers and public-sector union members;

Women in public sector unions make 24 percent more than non-union public sector women workers and have half the gender wage gap;

They are more likely to have health care, retirement pensions, paid leave and other benefits;

The public sector is the #1 employer of Black men (1 in 7), and #2 of Black women (1 in 5);

The wage gap between Black and white workers is significantly less in the public sector (2.2 percent) than the private (12.9 percent);

Black men in the public sector earn 23.6 percent more than in the private sector, Black women 25.4 percent.

Figures from Naomi Walker'S "The Racist Agenda Behind Friedrichs." *In These Times*, 3/1

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

U.S. Ignored Argentine Junta

El Pais (Spain) 3/22—"I believe we will see much repression, and probably a lot of bloodshed, very soon in Argentina. I believe they will not only harshly punish terrorists but, also any opposition in unions or politics", warned an aide to US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger on March 26, 1976, a few days after the military coup in Argentina.

…(Kissinger) didn't pay heed to the warning…(responding)… "They will need a little encouragement, I want to encourage them. I don't want to give them the impression that the US is harassing them."

The conversation above is found among the more than 4700 documents from the US Department of State that were declassified in 2002…

The following day the IMF extended a $127 million credit to the argentine military junta of Jorge Rafael Videla.

…Months before the coup…Kissinger requested a credit increase for the purchase of arms from 34 to 50 million dollars for the argentines for the year 1977 with the objective of:" adapting a modernization plan for the armed forces and maintaining relations with a country where the military is playing an ever greater role in government".

China's Workers: "We who refuse to be slaves!"

NYT, 3/15 — GUANGZHOU, China — For nearly seven years Li Wei rise before dawn seven days a week fir his 10-hour shift at the steel plant, returning home each night soaked in sweat, the clank of heavy machinery still ringing in his ears. But last month the 31-year-old welder stood outside the plant with hundreds of co-workers, picketing against pay cuts….

…The authorities declared their strike illegal, threatening fines and imprisonment. The police descended on the plant…tearing down signs and ordering the protesters…back to work….

…Strikes and labor protests have erupted across the country. Factories, mines and other businesses are withholding wages and benefits, laying off…or shutting down altogether….Workers are fighting back with unusual ferocity….

…Thousands of angry employees of the state-owned Longmay Mining Group…staged one of the most politically daring protests over unpaid salaries… ,denouncing the provincial governor….

China Labor Bulletin…recorded more than 2,700 strikes and protests last year, more than double…in 2014. The strife…[has] intensified,…with more than 500 in January alone.

Most demonstrations have…focused on…wage arrears, unpaid benefits like pension contributions and unsafe working conditions.

President Xi Jinping…has responded with a methodical crackdown, quashing protests, dismantling labor rights organizations and imprisoning activists….

The ["]Communist ["] Party…has continued to portray itself as a socialist guardian of worker's rights even as it has embraced capitalism and welcomed tycoons into its ranks….More than three million workers could lose their jobs in the next two years….

China trimmed the state sector of more than 30 million workers during a wave of privatization….

Here in…Guangdong Province…several hundred workers at the state-owned…steel plant went on strike…in response to a…decrease in wages by as much as half and extend[ing] the workday to 12 hours…

"Toward the sun, toward freedom!" the workers chanted…reciting a World War II-era army song….

…The authorities…tried to stop them from playing the…anthem…[whose] first line is, "Rise, we who refuse to be slaves!"

…Last year the province averaged more one labor dispute a day….Most…protests…were against private employers….But…the unrest could spread to government-owned businesses.

Obama continues sexist deportations

NYT, 3/10 — The Obama administration is moving ahead with deportations of migrants fleeing from… violence-racked countries in Central America….120 migrants were arrested…in a round-up in early January….

Since Oct. 1,…28,808 people…have been sent back to Central America….

Most…arrested…were women and children. Fewer than half of the, including young children, have been represented by lawyers in their asylum cases.

Beyond Flint: lead poisoning a racist attack on kids

NYT, 3/4 — CLEVELAND — …The residents of Flint, Mich., are still reeling from the drinking water debacle that more than doubled the share of children with elevated levels of lead in their blood…7 percent of all children tested.

Clevelanders'…comparable number…is 14.2 percent.…Too much lead in children's blood has long been an everyday fact in Cleveland and scores of other cities ….

"…This problem [is] going to persist for years to come," said…a…professor of preventive medicine and pediatrics at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine….

…Even vanishingly small amounts of it have a pernicious impact on young brains, stunting intellectual growth and affecting cardiovascular, immune and hormone systems….

By the most recent estimate, about 37 million homes and apartments still have some lead paint on walls and woodwork, 23 million with potentially hazardous levels in soil, paint chips or household dust….

…Four million of those most dangerous households have children….But in most cities, the lead threat is confined largely to poor neighborhoods….There is little official urgency — and increasingly little money — to address it….

A 2005 study of Chicago elementary school students concluded that blood lead concentrations…explained up to 15 percent of failing grades in reading and math….The C.D.C. [Center for Disease Control] has cut state grants for lead poisoning prevention by more than half since 2009, and the share of children younger than 6 who are tested has fallen by more than 40 percent….

In 2012, federal officials withdrew Cleveland's multimillion-dollar grant for addressing lead in homes because the city's track record was so poor….

…The city has found…$30 million for a 2013 renovation of its National Football League stadium — while lead abatement languished.

"A lot of folks failed," said…the director of Environmental Health Watch….You have a lot of folks affected who are people of color or low-income people. And honestly, people are not as concerned about them."

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

The Brooklyn Park Five

Capitalism Fails Black Youth and Women

BROOKLYN, NY, March 7—An innocent student's arrest on trumped-up charges has intensified anti-racist, anti-sexist fightback inside our school. Communist women in Progressive Labor Party are helping to lead this ongoing struggle.

In January, we learned that kkkops had arrested five teens, including one of our students, in connection with the rape of a young woman in a Brooklyn park. The news spread quickly, and one communist teacher asked the principal for an emergency staff meeting. By that point, even before the teens' first court appearance, the racist capitalist media had done its worst to convict them. Ranging in age from 14 to 17, these young people's photos, names and schools had been splashed over newspapers and websites. They were painted as violent, brutal rapists.

Black Students Guilty Before Trial

At the staff meeting, PLP comrades cautioned against jumping to conclusions. We reminded our co-workers of the Central Park Five, the infamous 1989 case where five Black and Latin boys from Harlem were falsely accused and convicted of raping a white woman jogging in Central Park. They spent up to 15 years in jail before being found innocent. In the sexist, dehumanizing profit system, which treats all workers as commodities, rape and sexist violence are rampant. But even as we defend women against these capitalist crimes, we must also defend our children against racist attacks.

The stereotype of the "animalistic" and "hypersexualized" Black male dates back to slavery. Used as a tool to oppress and divide the working class, it has destroyed the lives of countless innocent Black youth.

Students Discuss Racism, Sexism

Our next step was to bring this discussion into our classes. Students addressed the racist police tactics in poor, segregated neighborhoods like Brownsville, which is 93 percent Black and Latin. We discussed what students should and shouldn't do if they are ever arrested. (For example: Never make a statement to the police without a lawyer or parent present.) At the same time, we pointed out that our only real protection against cops is to fight back as a united working class.

Our young students understood how racism and sexism were being used in this case, which was actually about the criminalization of Black youth and the systemic oppression of women. The 18-year-old victim had in fact been abused by her father and utterly failed by "support systems" that care nothing about Black women. Capitalism is designed to fail the working class, particularly Black, Latin,and women workers.

Teachers Defend Student in Court

After a communist in the school got a call from the lawyer representing the accused student, she organized three teachers to come to the arraignment in support. The prosecution's case was weak, at best. As the defense lawyer noted, our student had "placed himself" at the scene of the crime only after three seasoned detectives had this scared youth alone in a room, without a lawyer or parent, to get the answer they wanted. Although the prosecution asked for $25,000 bail, the judge set it at $2,500. That may seem like a victory, but the amount was still impossible for the family. The lawyer made a plea to raise funds to keep our student out of Rikers Island, the New York City jail notorious for racist violence. Family and teachers got into gear and made phone calls, and the money was raised.

Organizing Inside the Schools

With communist and anti-racist leadership, the following days at school were full of discussions about the racist system and the need to fight it and defend our student. Money was raised within the school and beyond by some staunchly anti-racist teachers. We also discussed how to help our student in his transition back to school, with the weight of his charges still pending.

On February 24, the district attorney announced that charges against all five teens had been officially dropped. Again, this may seem like a great victory until you consider that these young men will forever have to deal with the consequences of this racist system. Their names will forever be connected to rape charges; they have been traumatized in countless ways.

Students, Not Criminals

Like thousands of Black and Latin students across the city, our students are treated like criminals every day. To enter the school, they must line up to file through metal detectors while being shouted at by New York City cops. Their bottled drinks are confiscated on the phony pretext that they might contain alcohol. When they walk through their own neighborhoods, they can never know when the racist cops will decide that they "fit the description" of a criminal suspect. Once they graduate, they face the grim reality of 51 percent unemployment for Black youth.

But that is the nature of capitalism, a system that needs racism to divide and pacify the working class. There is only one world that will smash racism and sexism—a communist world! Under communism, a society organized around meeting workers' needs, collectivity is essential. The political and economic divisions created by racism and sexism will be destroyed. Only then will we be able to build a world worthy of working-class women and men.

It is our continuing task in our schools and workplaces to show our friends, co-workers, teachers and students that they must join this fight. In that spirit, we are now organizing our second annual anti-racist school assembly. The struggle continues!✪



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